

Baptism Sunday

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, June 8, 2025
PASSAGES	Acts 2; Romans 6; 1 Peter 3; John 7; Romans 3
MESSAGE	Begins at 0:58:56 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Baptism is a work of Christ, not a work of the person in the water or the person doing the baptizing. Jesus — risen, ascended, and enthroned as the promised son of David — is himself the baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and the promise is for everyone who believes, however small that belief feels today.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ The church has baptized by immersion and by pouring since the earliest centuries. The practice diverged early because Jesus never specified a method — he simply said baptize.
- ◆ When the early church argued over baptisms performed by a bishop who later turned traitor, the answer was: don't get rebaptized. It was never that man's work to begin with.
- ◆ Peter's Pentecost sermon argues from a tomb. David is dead and buried; Jesus is not. So the unbroken throne promised to David's line belongs to Jesus.
- ◆ The Spirit is poured out *because* Jesus is glorified. Pentecost is a public demonstration of his enthronement, not a separate event.
- ◆ The Spirit is an inheritance, not a wage. Paul asks the Galatians point-blank whether they received him by works of the law or by hearing with faith.
- ◆ "Rivers of living water" is ongoing, not a one-time issue. You did not use up your allotment on the day you were baptized.
- ◆ Three reasons to be baptized: it is an appeal to God for a clean conscience, it follows Jesus into the water, and it is plain obedience to what he commanded.

- ◆ Take inventory of your faith and you will grade yourself a C plus. That is not a reason to stay dry — small faith is something God values a great deal.

► 0:59:34

Matt opened with a rabbi joke about whether the divine name ends in a *w* or a *v* — the answer being that it sounds like a *vuh*, which settles nothing. He used it deliberately. A good deal of what the early church did was ambiguous in the same way, and Baptism Sunday is a good day to say so out loud.

An ancient practice that was never uniform

► 1:00:13

Around the Roman world baptism was usually by dunking. In ancient Syria, by the 200s, they poured water over the head, because to their minds the best analogy was Pentecost — the Spirit *falling* on the church. Go back as far as the record goes and you find Christians in different places each saying, this is how we do it. Which means the practice is old enough to have diverged early, because Jesus gave no method, only a command. The Lord's Supper is the same: some of the oldest evidence shows a ceremonial bread and cup, some a full meal. The emphasis was *do this in remembrance of me*, not, as Matt put it, “make sure there's potato salad.”

► 1:01:42

Then the hard case. Persecution turned the heat up, and some bishops compromised — made deals, handed over the scriptures to be burned. What about everyone they had baptized? The church's answer was that you do not get rebaptized, any more than you would get remarried because the man who officiated later failed. “It's a work of Christ, not the work of a man.”

“If you're on your way over here, you had a fight with your family, you didn't have enough breakfast, you said a bad word — it's a work of Christ.”

Pentecost, and why the Spirit came when he did

► 1:02:55

The date was not incidental: this Sunday was Pentecost. For Israel it fell fifty days after Passover — *pentēkostē*, fiftieth — a day to remember the giving of the law and to honor God with the firstfruits of harvest. Many who had traveled for Passover simply stayed, so Jerusalem was full. The disciples had been told to wait, and they were praying when the Spirit fell with fire and power and they began

declaring the glory of God in languages they had never learned. The commotion drew a crowd, which Matt takes to have been the point.

► 1:05:01

Who does the baptizing was settled long before that morning, by John at the Jordan:

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

MATTHEW 3:11 ↗

Peter’s argument from an occupied tomb

► 1:05:37

Peter preaches from “you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your holy one see corruption” — and then makes the observation everything turns on:

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.”

ACTS 2:29 ↗

David is dead and, Matt noted dryly, presumably decayed. So the psalm was not about him. He was a king and also a prophet, and he was speaking about a descendant — one God swore to seat on his throne (Acts 2:30–32). Jesus is in that royal line, his body did not decay, and because he is raised in power and will never die again, he can hold the throne unbroken. The promise is not merely kept but permanently kept.

► 1:08:09

And that is what connects the throne to the fire:

“Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.”

ACTS 2:33 ↗

David never ascended, but he wrote “the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand” — and Peter lands it on the crowd: God has made this Jesus, the one you crucified, both Lord and Christ. The Spirit on the church is the visible evidence of an invisible enthronement.

“What shall we do?”

► 1:09:47

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

ACTS 2:38–39 ↗

Even complicity in the crucifixion is not a disqualification. Come if you are thirsty; come if you are burdened. And *all who are far off* reaches this room without straining: “Sometimes we talk about going to the nations. Technically, we are the nations. We’re super duper far away from Jerusalem. This is the ends of the earth. Welcome to Texas.” Many generations of children’s children later, the promise still holds, because the qualifier is not distance or descent but everyone the Lord calls.

► 1:12:11

The weight sits on faith, not procedure — so heavily that in Acts 10 Gentiles receive the Spirit while Peter is still talking, before anyone finds water. Paul presses the same point on the Galatians: “Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?” (Galatians 3:2). Not, Matt said, “because we did extra Christiany stuff.” The Spirit is an inheritance.

Rivers, not a single pour

► 1:13:57

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ Now this he said about the Spirit... for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

JOHN 7:37–39 ↗

The disciples were not in timeout; the delay was about Jesus, not about them. And the image is a river, which is to say ongoing — “otherwise it’s like a wet creek that was a river.” Nobody needs to conclude

that the day they were baptized was their one Spirit day, that they spent it badly, and that a second dunking would top up the tank. If you want more — greater gifts, greater power — the Spirit distributes as he chooses, so be grateful for what you have and ask. You are not excluded and you are not disqualified for failing to be the apostle Peter.

Into his death, and out the other side

► 1:17:32

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

ROMANS 6:3–4 ↗

Going under is a burial. Matt granted the picture is imperfect — Jesus was laid in a new-cut tomb, not under dirt — and declined to get hung up on the logistics. The part that matters is that we do not leave anyone under the water. The invitation is to both halves: joined to his death so we can be joined to his risen life.

► 1:19:46

Peter reaches for Noah — eight people brought safely through water (1 Peter 3:18–20) — and then says what baptism is and is not:

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God.”

1 PETER 3:21–22 ↗

You are not taking a bath. You are appealing to God — and the ground of the appeal is the same enthroned Christ Peter preached at Pentecost.

Why we need the burial at all

► 1:22:31

Most of us quietly grade ourselves against the people around us and come out slightly above average. That was never the standard.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift.” It has to be a gift. “There’s no negotiations up here. There’s no contracts you’re going to sign. It’s not a low interest loan. You’ll never pay it back.” And the exit door is closed from the inside:

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” Matt noted the chiastic shape of those verses and pointed at the middle — the burger in the sandwich — which is that if we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive.

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23) — free to us, not free to him. And the timing of that gift rules out the idea that we cleaned ourselves up first:

“while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” If he died for enemies, the person who is merely hesitant is hardly a difficult case.

At once

► 1:26:08

Two stories, and Matt wanted the same two words from both. The Philippian jailer asks what he must do to be saved, hears “believe in the Lord Jesus,” washes their wounds, and “was baptized at once, he and all his family” (Acts 16:30–33). The Ethiopian official, reading a scroll he cannot interpret until Philip explains that it is about Jesus, looks out the window and asks what prevents him from being baptized (Acts 8:36). Nothing did. They stopped the wagon.

► 1:23:50

Which is why Matt kept undercutting the reasons people give for waiting. Take inventory of your own faith and the exercise turns absurd — “sometimes when I look for my faith, I’m like, B minus, maybe C plus. What metrics are we using?” Faith grows, God willing; that growth is not a new plateau requiring a new baptism. And the practical obstacles are smaller still: check your pockets, take out the cell phone, and note that there is no rule against being baptized in slacks. He double-checked.

Three reasons, and the last one is a command

► 1:28:02

First, it is an appeal to God for a clean conscience — an expression of faith. Second, Jesus himself was baptized, and we honor him by following him into the water. Third, he told us to:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 ↗

Nine people were baptized that morning, one of them offsite with family who could not travel. The adults and older kids introduced themselves and made their confession at the tank; the younger ones had recorded and transcribed testimonies so that no one who wanted to speak would be silenced by nerves. Nobody was coerced. Then everyone gathered under the tree in the corner of the lot, shared what shade there was, went youngest to oldest, and had a party.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- [Matthew 3:11](#)
- [Psalm 16:10](#)
- [Acts 2:29](#)
- [Acts 2:30–32](#)
- [Acts 2:33](#)
- [Acts 2:34–36](#)
- [Acts 2:38–39](#)
- [Acts 10:44–48](#)
- [Galatians 3:2](#)
- [John 7:37–39](#)
- [Romans 6:3–4](#)
- [1 Peter 3:18–20](#)
- [1 Peter 3:21–22](#)
- [Romans 3:23–24](#)
- [1 John 1:8–10](#)
- [Romans 6:23](#)
- [Romans 5:6–8](#)
- [Acts 16:30–33](#)
- [Acts 8:36](#)
- [Matthew 28:18–20](#)

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. The early church settled the traitor-bishop question by insisting baptism is a work of Christ. Where are you still treating something God did as though it depended on the person who administered it?
2. Peter's whole case rests on the fact that David's tomb was still occupied and Jesus' was not. Why does the resurrection have to be a bodily one for that argument to work?
3. "Rivers of living water" is ongoing rather than a one-time pour. What has made you suspect your own supply ran out, and what would you ask for now?
4. Matt described trying to grade his own faith at a B minus or C plus. What are you waiting to feel before you take a step you already know to take?
5. The jailer and the Ethiopian both acted at once. What is the "what prevents me?" in front of you this week, and what will you do about it?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33j_bLV_2w0&t=3536s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.